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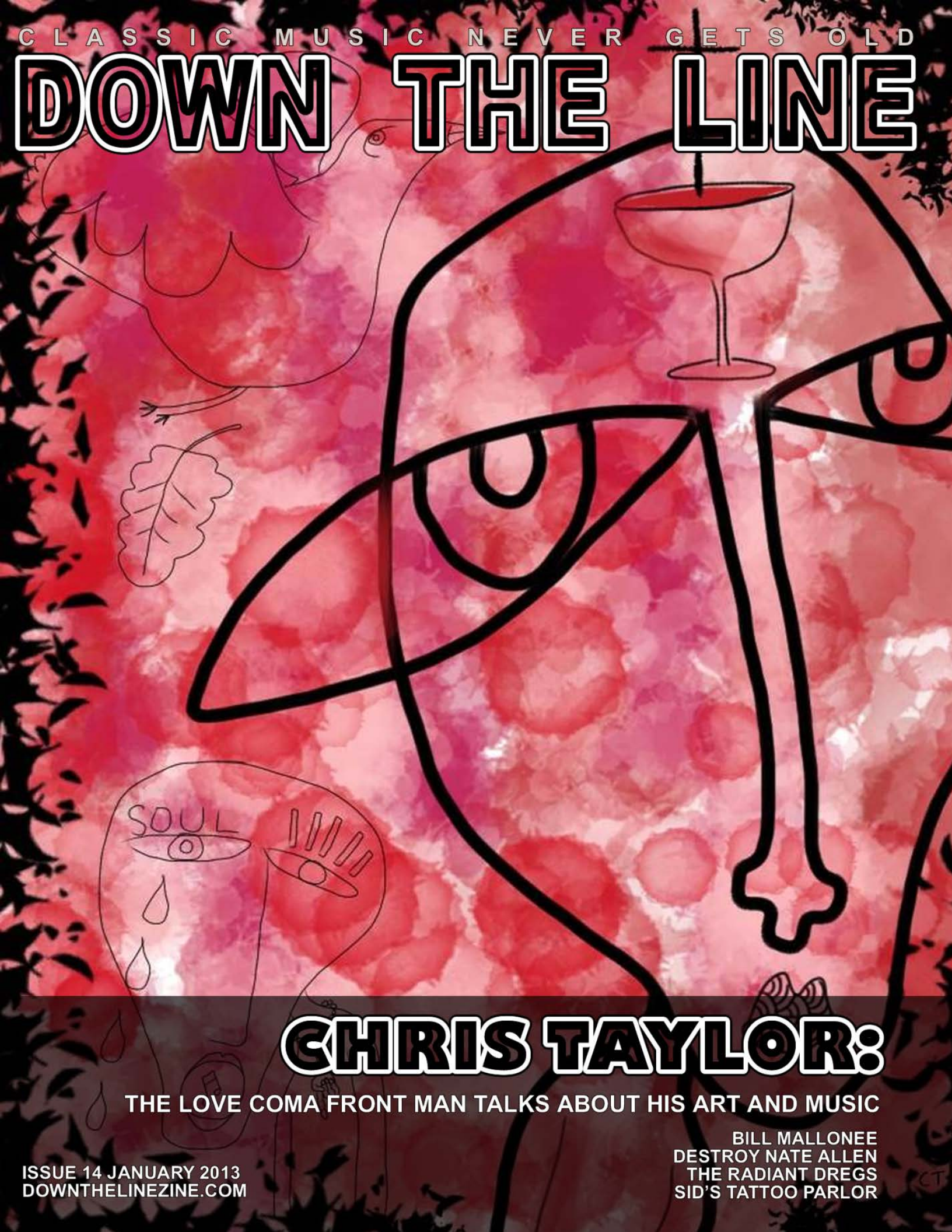
DOWN THE LINE



CHRIS TAYLOR:

THE LOVE COMA FRONT MAN TALKS ABOUT HIS ART AND MUSIC

BILL MALLONEE
DESTROY NATE ALLEN
THE RADIANT DREGS
SID'S TATTOO PARLOR

ISSUE 14 JANUARY 2013
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(Freedom Firm did not buy this ad nor do they endorse this magazine – just givin' ya food for thought)

SORRY FOR THE DELAY!

Life is always busy for us all, but for some reason the past few months have been really busy for those of us here at DTL. So this issue is extremely delayed and for that we apologize. We would like to get these out more often, but such is life.

For this issue Josh had the idea of doing lists of our favorite albums of 2012. This proved to be harder than it sounded, but we came up with some interesting lists for you. Not to mention the return of the "Tattoo You" feature on Sid's Tattoo parlor. There are a ton of reviews and news bits this issue, so make sure to check them all out.

http://downthelinezine.com

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DOWN THE LINE

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WRITE US	Letters and comments need to contain your full name. All submissions become property of Down the Line E-zine and may be edited or condensed. Or even printed out and framed if you really kiss our… um… never mind….

VISION:

Down the Line covers bands that explored the intersection between faith and art in the 1980s through the early 1990s - even though they were probably never accepted in to what is called "Contemporary Christian Music" because they were too edgy or alternative or liberal or for whatever reason. Some of these bands may still be making music today, and others may have moved on. We cover these bands (active or dormant) as well as any new projects by former members of these bands and any new bands that may have the same spirit as these bands.

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LETTERS TO US

The Magically Vanishing Issue

I was wondering if issue #3 could be reposted. The Mediafire link is down.

Sean MacNair

(Don't really know what happened to that one – but it is fixed now. Or so I think.)

Die Happy Magdallen

I've only recently discovered your 'Zine, but have been enjoying it immensely and have read each and every back issue "cover to cover" (well, digital cover to digital cover if you will). Thanks for such a great publication.

A piece of news that you may have already seen, but just thought you might be interested to see in case you haven't gotten it... (and I just RANDOMLY found this while looking for some other information)

I haven't heard of Philip Bardowell doing anything in quite a while (although I have to admit, I live on the opposite coast from a lot of "the scene", so it's sometimes difficult to keep up with the goings on). It seems he's still doing the occasional show (see this link for recent news).

Also, just by way of request... if you haven't done so yet, would you PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PRETTY PLEASE give me some kind of update on one of my all-time favorite bands - Die Happy? What are the members of that group up to now?

Keep up the good work and soldier on!

Grace and Peace,
Andy Anderson

(Thanks for the update! We hear rumors that the original members of Die Happy are working together on some live shows and maybe some new material. No official websites yet, but we'll keep on the lookout.)

90s Christian Music Recovery Group

I am loving it! I've been a member for a short time but the interactions that have happened so far have been PRICELESS! I am a musician that grew up listening to a lot of the artists, and more recently have been blessed to work with some of them.

Joel Goodwin

(If you haven't joined this Facebook group yet, you are missing out. Some of the bands and musicians that we cover here are even a part of it.)

Have any other questions, comments, theological musings, etc? We would love to hear them – come be our friend on FaceBook or comment on our blog. We also do that Twitter thing occasionally.

New Thumper Punk Records Bands

Infirmities (High Velocity Thrash fused with 80's Rock Solos and Hardcore Street Punk), **Fear God** (Orange County punk), **180 Out** (50's rockabilly, 60's surf/punk, 70's funk, and 80's rock infused with today's punk sound), and **A Broken Line** (eclectic mix of street punk, ska, pop punk, metal, and good ol' rock n roll) all have recently joined Thumper Punk Records. Some great music to check out.

Classic Frontline Re-Issues

Now available fresh from the Vault: *Ten Songs* by **Adam Again** (re-mastered 25th Anniversary) (bit.ly/aa10songs), **Daniel Amos** - *Motorcycle* (bit.ly/da-cycle), and **The Lost Dogs** - *Scenic Routes* (bit.ly/scenicroutes). Available at iTunes, AmazonMP3, and frontlinerecords.us.

The Radiant Dregs Present The Savior ep

In July 2011 the Radiant Dregs ended a several year break from the home studio and recorded a song called Savior. The song quickly became a favorite among friends of the Dregs and is without a doubt their most popular song to date. The Dregs noticed that the song Savior seemed lonely sitting there by itself between Silver Chord and Boo. There was only one solution, record four new tracks to go along with it and release it as an ep. You can download the full project for free HERE.

Scapegoat Releases New CD

Fans of underground samplers from the 90s might remember some heavy, groovy, funky, humorous songs by a band called Scapegoat. Many people thought they would be the next big thing… but sadly the music business missed out. A few years ago they announced that they would be releasing their material from back in the day, but several technical problems got in the way. Finally, this week they announced that they have finally released *89 to 94* – a collection of demo and compilation songs from that same time frame. Many of the songs from the samplers appears along with several tracks from their demos – so go check it out.

Pre-Order Aradhna's Live Album

ARADHNA's NEW Album, recorded in Nashville, TN with Songs of Water, will be available for pre-release download starting Christmas Eve! All proceeds from this album will go directly to benefit Freedom Firm. There are multiple donation levels with a variety of gifts from ARADHNA & Freedom Firm to choose from.

3 Car Pile Up Returns With New EP

3 Car Pile Up released one album way back in the 90s on Narrowpath Records and then disappeared. They have recently appeared again on Facebook and released a 6 song ep (available on Noisetrade and iTunes). Produced by Troy Deaton (Atticus Fault/Curious Fools) and Todd Evans (The Golden Sounds, Atticus Fault), "this ep has a 90's rock sound mixed with today's hard rockin' drums/bass, catchy hooks and guitar solos!" I checked it out today and fans of the bands we cover here will love it – look for a review soon.

The Violet Burning Releases Divine 2.0

The Violet Burning has released *Divine 2.0* – their classic Christmas collection, re-mastered with two new songs. Or, as the band puts it: "Clearer, Louder, Warmer, Wider = Divine 2.0." The album can be bought as a high download or as a limited edition hand-painted and numbered CD. In addition, "to make it extra special for violets fans, we are donating proceeds towards the Local Shelter in Salem, MA. They do a great work caring for the poor, the needy, and those who need another chance to get to a more stable place in this challenging life. So, enjoy some great music and help our neighbors in need." Visit thevioletburning.com to purchase.

Frontline Records Rewind

New Frontline Records Rewind Episodes are now available! Features songs from "Frontline Gratitude" compilation and interviews with Jerry Davison, Rick Elias and Mike Knott. Go to this page to hear it now!

Steve's favorite albums of 2012 in no particular order, and surely grossly incomplete…

I decided to give a best of 2012 list a shot…I don't usually do these because I can't rate most higher than others and I listen to so much music from days gone by that I find many times what I'm really into at the time came out 20 years ago. Here are some of my many, many favorites that actually came out in 2012. I know I have left out many important bands and releases; this was just my "off the top of my head" list.

- The Bloody Strummers – Return of the Halcyon Days
- Royal Thunder – CVI
- Killing Joke – MMXII
- Bill Mallonee – Amber Waves
- Bob Dylan - Tempest
- NOFX – Self Entitled
- Dinosaur Jr. – I Bet on Sky
- Swans – The Seer
- Leonard Cohen – Old Ideas
- Joy Electric – Dwarf Mountain Alphabet
- The Flaming Lips and Heady Fwends
- Kissing Cousins – Unfortunate End
- The Violet Burning – Pentimento Volumes 1 & 2
- The Choir – The Loudest Sound Ever Heard
- Hammock – Departure Songs
- The 77's – Echos O' Faith & Played Naked
- Seventh Circle – The Line (single)
- The Sword – Apocryphon
- Graveyard – Lights Out
- Mammoth Thunderpower – I am Thunder EP

I don't know when this was released, but I got the 25th anniversary re-mastered edition of Adam Again's 10 songs. This also reminds me to tell you to head over to www.frontlinerecords.us and get any Frontline Records release you can want for $5.99. This means that all you guys who have shared CD's that were long out of print, now you can support the bands!

I am also semi patiently waiting to hear the new albums coming from Bad Religion, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds and The Lifesavers. Maybe we will get some new Hidden from Blackout and Western Grace, maybe some new DAS and Ric Alba solo…maybe a new Bloody Strummers??? The new Dropkick Murphy's is pretty awesome, but it did come out this year and not 2012.

Official Daniel Amos Bootlegs For Sale

Can't get enough DA/Eddies/Terry Taylor music to listen to? Well, they have been digging through decades of live recordings to bring you some of the best. You can find them all for download here: danielamosboots.bandcamp.com

Deacon Blue Returns With New Music

Fans of Deacon Blue and Ricky Ross will be glad to know that a new Deacon Blue album is out now! *The Hipsters* is the first Deacon Blue album in 11 years. You can listen to the second single "The Outsiders" or watch the video to the first single "The Hipsters" on their new website deaconblue.com. If you don't know who Deacon Blue is, well, they were a big multi-platinum selling act in England in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Band leader Ricky Ross recorded an album for the Christian label Sticky Music before forming Deacon Blue. You can read more about their history in the Cross Rhythms article: "Ricky Ross: The Deacon Blue man talks about his music and faith."

The Ocean Blue Announces New Album

David Schelzel of The Ocean Blue has helped to launch a new label called Korda Records. The label was really started by several different bands that were looking to record new albums but needed a label to work with. The new album by The Ocean Blue will be released in January 2013 through this new label. Stay tuned for details.

SLIDE Re-Emerge as Dime Store Zombies

Things have been a bit quiet in the SLIDE camp for a while… But now we know the truth… "Zombies Ate SLIDE… And the result is Dime Store Zombies. Consider it a necessary (dare we say?) Reboot. Same band. Different name. The recording for self-titled Dime Store Zombies Album begins in early 2013. Planned album release date: October 2013. Live Dates for 2013 to be revealed shortly. And how about a new Music Video?" See the band's new Facebook page for the reason for the change and for details as they are announced.

New Jesse Sprinkle Projects

In the spring of 2013, Jesse and Kurt Johnson are heading to Kampala, Uganda to collaborate, record the album *Paradise, Uganda*, and rejoice in the power of music with The Kampala Street Singers. All proceeds from record sales and live performances in USA and Uganda will go directly back to the music and art community in Kampala.

Also, celebrating one year of concerts at Bluebrick Recordings. Featuring Jesse, Amanda, Mira, Gretta, Ravenna, Winston, and Amos. Part 1 – Recorded in September for all of our friends and loved ones Part 2 – Archives collected from over the last 7 years. This is a true piece of history from the Sprinkles. Every song has a story. Every Child has a voice. jessesprinkle.net

Deni Gauthier Working On New Album

Deni Gauthier – singer, songwriter, recording artist, and Michael Knott fan – has a chance to be a part of a unique opportunity. After 10 years of recording several successful albums – a big break. "Andre Wahl, producer, engineer, mixer, and in demand industry great heard Deni's music and recognized the talent and the need to nurture this voice and these wonderful songs, and release them into the world. Properly. Andre has worked with *Shania Twain, Flaming Lips, Mudvayne, Great Big Sea, Pink Floyd, Rush, Hawksley Workman*… and countless other professional musicians." You can read more about Deni at denigauthier.com.

Mike Indest is Now on Bandcamp

Mike Indest of Motonaut and The Basement Tapes fame has his music up for free on Bandcamp. You can grab *Shine Down*, *Let's Have Church*,*Live @Tipintina's*, or Motonaut's *The Now And Not Yet* for free. And while you are at it, be sure to catch the latest episode of The Basement Tapes where Mike interviews author Brian Godawa about his *Chronicles of the Nephilim* series. Interesting stuff!

Picking a Top 20 was hard. I came up with a list of over 40, whittled it down to 20, and then couldn't decide on the order. So here they are alphabetically. Most of these came out in 2012, but I threw in a few here that I just discovered this year that are too good to leave out.

1. **Bill Mallonee – Amber Waves.** Bill is still the best. Poetic words, great music.
2. **The Bloody Strummers – Return of the Halcyon Days.** Coolest indie combination I have heard: The Doors + SF59. Genius.
3. **Branden Mann And The Reprimand – The Chemicals Won't Balance.** This is 2011 that I just discovered. Groovy folk that is fun to cruise to.
4. **The Choir – The Loudest Sound Ever Heard.** The Choir. What else needs to be said? They keep getting better with time.
5. **Destroy Nate Allen – With Our Powers Combined.** Crazy fun folk punk that Josh Lory turned me on to.
6. **Insomniac Folklore – A Place Where Runaways are not Alone.** I think Steve got me hooked on this dark gothic folk.
7. **Jagged Doctrine – To Whom It May Concern.** Industrial metal still rules, and Jagged Doctrine is still bringing it.
8. **Jeff Elbel + Ping – Gallery.** Elbel has been all over the place, but his own band is a great listen.
9. **Kissing Cousins – Unfortunate End.** Just an EP, but still some great, dark alternative. The cousins never disappoint.
10. **L.S. Underground – PTSD (Legacy Edition).** Okay, the original was out years ago, but this re-master makes it perfect. Probably my top album of the year.
11. **Megadeth – TH1RT3EN.** Another 2011 release that I got this year. Mustaine is killing it on his last few albums. This is awesome stuff. Metal rules!
12. **Saint – The Revelation.** Not terribly original, but top of the line power metal.
13. **SLIDE – Auto Tune Massacre.** I love the sound they hit on here. Collector's Edition now that they changed their name to Dime Store Zombies.
14. **Soul-Junk – 1961.** Brilliant return to indie rock.
15. **Starflyer 59 – IAMACEO.** Wasn't sure how this would be after the last album, but it is an excellent independent debut.
16. **Steve Scott – Emotional Tourist: A Steve Scott Retrospective.** Career spanning album that should have been a box set.
17. **Ultra Monark – Exorcising Spirits.** Elder/4LC front man returns with the next level of twisted alterna-goth awesomeness.
18. **Unteachers – Fear of Silence.** This is technically only one song on a split, but it is one awesome song and the 7-inch has one of the coolest covers ever.
19. **W.A.S.P. – Babylon.** Okay, this one is actually 2009, but I finally got a copy and it is really good. Blackie makes more sense that he has embraced God.
20. **Wovenhand – The Laughing Stalk.** Awesomeness. Epic awesomeness.

Dann Gunn is Now on BandCamp
Fans of Dann Gunn and Velocipede will be glad to know that he is moving over to BandCamp. He has set-up his recent ep *Easy* for a free or pay what you like pricing structure. You can read the DTL review of *Easy* here to see what you are getting into, or just go to the BandCamp page and listen yourself. We hear there may be more music coming from Mr. Gunn soon…. so stay tuned!

90s Christian Music Recovery Group
Fans of any music from the 90's Christian music scene would love the rousing (and sometimes crazy) discussions happening in the 90s Christian Music Recovery Group on Facebook. With over 5000 members now, I am going to guess that everyone reading this is already a member. But if not, you should join. Because I think we are going to declare it the official discussion board of Down the Line magazine. There is so much news coming through that group I don't know if we can keep up. But the interesting thing is that there are a ton of band members, label people, former magazine people, managers, you name it all over the place dropping all kinds of tales and answering all kinds of questions. You have been warned – don't miss out!

L.S. Underground – PTSD (Re-Master)
L.S. Underground's PTSD (Legacy Edition) is out now on Retroactive Records and available at Amazon! Re-Mastered by J.Powell Steinhaus Mastering with new packaging. L.S.Underground includes Joshua Lory (Lifesavers), Brian Doidge, Jim Chaffin (the Crucified, the Blamed), and Casey Prestwood (Hot Rod Circuit). It has been in Knott's heart to create an album that would bring awareness to the overwhelming difficulties that U.S. and allied troops encounter upon returning from combat, especially Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. 10% percentage of the sales of this crucial release will go PTSD awareness. Packaged in a four panel digipak, this 2012 Retroactive Records release has been digitally mastered by J Powell of Steinhaus for maximum sound capacity. For fans of the heavy, dark, aggressive rock bands like Tool, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Jane's Addiction, Iggy Pop, David Bowie, and Public Image Ltd.
http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008VNFV8E

Mini Mendez Returns
Former frontman of The Holidays (who was also featured in the May 2011 issue) Mini Mendez has recently released new material. His band The Glimmer Stars has released a digital three song ep called *Lay The Real Thing On Me*. It can be found at most digital outlets (iTunes, eMusic, Amazon, etc). Mini has also released more solo material on his BandCamp page – including the single "Kay Lenz" and the five song ep *Shine Baby Shine*. all three releases are catchy and cheap – so be sure to grab a copy.

Dissident Prophet Returns
Remember Dissident Prophet from the 90s? They put out several singles and a full length *We Are Not Grasshoppers* before changing their name to The Maccabees. The Maccabees put out two albums and then disappeared. Well, it seems they decided to go back to Dissident Prophet and release a new album for free. *Weapons of Mass Deception* picks up where the Prophets left off and keeps the guitar-fueled alternative fires flowing. You can pick it up for free on their BandCamp page, along with most of their older releases under both names.

Recent Skypark Album
Remember Skypark? They release two albums in the late 1990's (*Am I Pretty?* and *Over Blue City*) and then disappeared. Well, it turns out that they didn't totally go away and even released an album in 2006. *No Ambition* is a great effort that may be their best offering yet. Head over to their BandCamp page to check it and out and even name your own price for it.

New Music From Daniel Amos in 2013
The rumblings and rumors have finally come true – Daniel Amos has officially kicked off a Kickstarter campaign for their next album. And they have already reached their goal – but there are still 29 days left to claim some cool stuff for the different levels of support. This will be the first new Daniel Amos album since 2001's *Mr. Buechner's Dream*. Also of note – you can still pre-order the comic book/CD combo *Return to the Neverhood!* now, featuring new music by Terry Taylor and illustrations by TenNapel. Fans of Taylor's video game soundtracks will want to grab this one.

The Violet Burning Releases Rare Demos
The Violet Burning recently announced that the original recording sessions from the demo eps *Lillian Gish* and *You Wouldn't Understand Anyways* are now available in one collection. Originally released on cassettes and sold only at the now historic violets shows at the now defunct clubs, The Coconut Teaser and The Electric Ballroom in Southern California. These would be the recordings that led to the Self-Titled album released in 1996. These are also the controversial recordings born out of the devastation surrounding the violet burning during 1990-93 which saw love lost, cult-like church/record label behavior, and the deaths of a few of the band's closest friends and collaborators. This is the first time these recordings have been made available together completely uncensored. See thevioletburning.com for ordering details.

The Choir Releases Brand New Song
"On July 22nd, Tim Chandler, Dan Michaels, Steve Hindalong and Derri Daugherty went into the studio to record, produce, mix and finish an entire song in one day. They were joined by a group of remarkable friends from all over the US and Canada to share in the experience. With the help of Lisa Michaels and Nancy Hindalong, The Choir hosted a Nashville weekend hang out that included a barbeque, swimming, private concert and a lot of swell conversations. A song came out of that weekend called "Shadow of the Cross". It is available on iTunes today. It will be up on Amazon, Spotify, Rhapsody and other online sites soon. We are grateful to the fine folks who traveled to be with us – very humbled. Thanks also to Shane Wilson who engineered and mixed for us that day with Evan Redwine. Please share: http://tinyurl.com/8lhhuxk"

New From Justin McRoberts
Justin McRoberts (he had some albums out on 5 minute Walk as well as independent that you should check out) is working on an interesting project called *CMYK*. It is a book and album that completes a recent series of EPs. He is looking to Kickstarter to fund this project and still needs a bit of help. You can read more of the details on his Kickstarter page and donate a dollar or more if you like.

Live Report:

The Choir – Magnolia, TX 10-6-2012

By Garret Riveness

This was my first house concert – those hosting the show were more than gracious to admit strangers like me. With this being the third night on this short Fall tour, it seemed so fitting that the The Choir had thus far played in a church, a bar, and now somebody's backyard.

This concert was the full lineup: Derri Daugherty, Steve Hindalong, Tim Chandler and Dan Michaels playing sax and lyricon (who we were lucky enough to have because he was only able to play part of the tour). The band occupied the back patio as a stage but that didn't deter them from putting together a full electric two-hour set opening with the first four songs from the 1988 release *Chase the Kangaroo*. After skipping ahead to the song "Chase the Kangaroo," the guys broke off from their usual presentation of that entire album to spend more time on songs from their new release *The Loudest Sound Ever Heard*.

One thing that was so evident was how timeless The Choir's musical library is. While songs like "Consider," "Sad Face," and "Circle Slide" were true to their original recordings, they didn't sound at all like they were 25 years old. The transition from those songs to more recent releases like "Taking the Universe In," "Strange Girl," and "Burning Like the Midnight Sun" was seamless.

A fair portion of the audience seemed to be getting their first exposure to The Choir, yet the songs seemed to connect well enough that the two hour set really wasn't long enough. I still had my list of personal favorites that I would have liked to hear but I know that when you've been cranking out great music for nearly thirty years there is going to be some picking and choosing when it comes to making up a set list.

One of the best parts of a house show is the opportunity to visit with the band following the concert. The guys were more than happy to hang out and meet new friends and reminisce with old fans.

The Choir is continuing to tour as they have dates currently scheduled through November. Also, their 2012 release *The Loudest Sound Ever Heard* is currently available at their website www.thechoir.net.

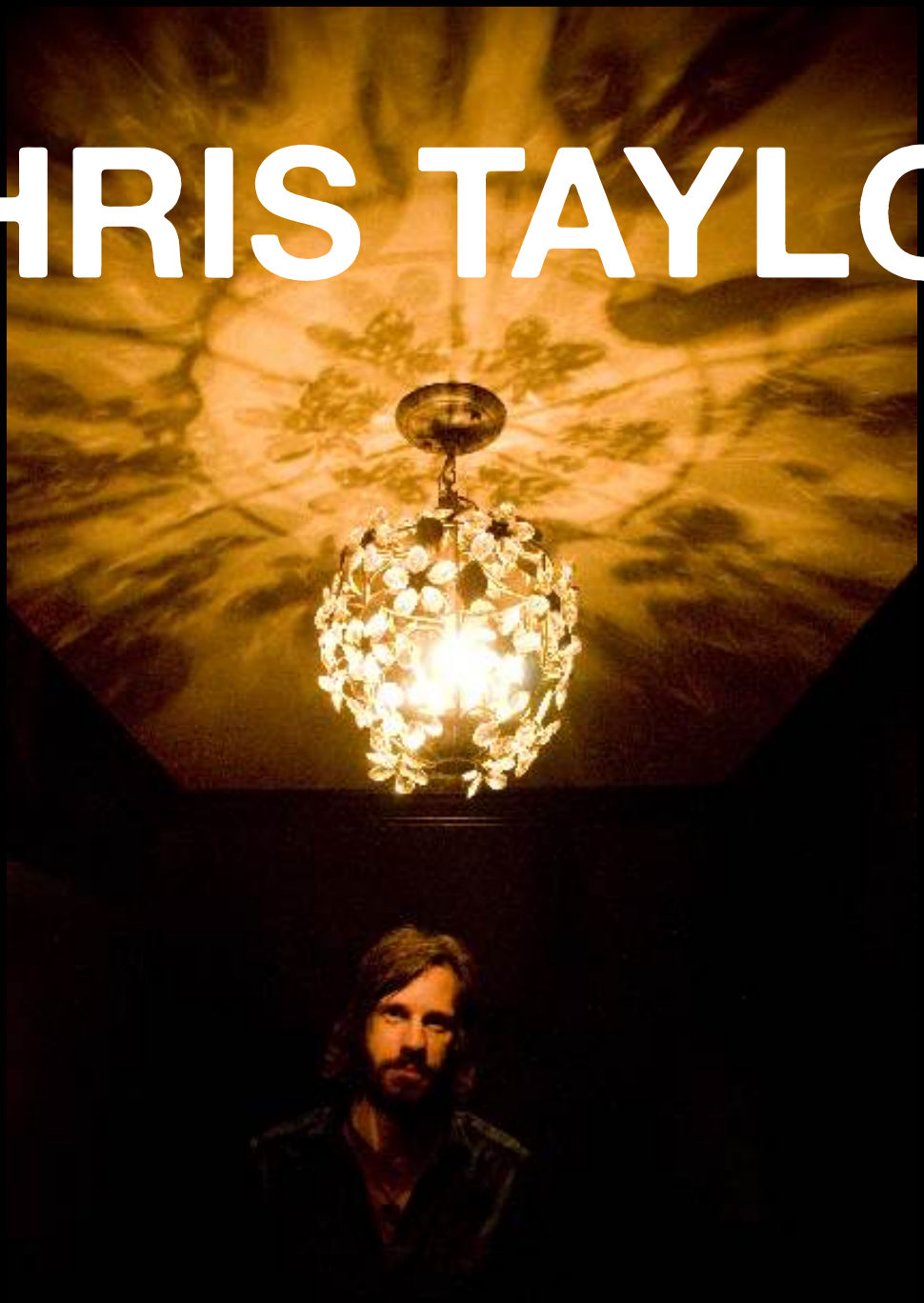
Joshua Lory's Top 20 Albums of 2012

1. **Forgetters – S/T.** Ex-Jawbreaker/Jets To Brazil singer/songwriter and lyricist extraordinaire Blake Schwartzenbach really made the right album for me this year, dark, brooding, and beautiful. Having J.Robbins produce and play bass doesn't hurt either.
2. **Gasoline Heart – Thanks For Everything**. I wrote a longer review for this one. Raw and emotional, great lyrics.
3. **Bill Mallonee – Amber Waves**. It's a Mallonee album, it's perfect, nuff said!
4. **The Brian Jonestown Massacre – Aufheben!** - A return to the sound that made me fall for this band with still some of the newer vibe going on. Garage/Folk/Psychedelic/Pop. Matt Hollywood rejoins the fold and it's obvious. This is one of my all time favorite bands.
5. **Jack White – Blunderbuss.** First solo release, as good as any White Stripes album, but with more layers.
6. **The Choir – The Loudest Sound Ever Heard**. Is it me or does this band get better with time? The past 3 albums (not counting De-plumed) are my favorites from the band.
7. **Hot Water Music – Exister**. Great comeback album! Chuck Ragan's voice sounds better than ever. They are the best at what they do!
8. **The Menzingers – On The Impossible Past**. Great melodies, catchy hooks, excellent lyrics. All the songs go together to tell a story of loss, love, friendship, and memories, car crashes and Rock n' Roll.
9. **Green Day – (tie) !Uno!, !Dos!, !Tre!** Three new great albums, all with their own vibe. Out of all 3 albums only a couple of songs didn't do it for me. I've been a fan since 1991! Oh, and my old buddy Chris Dugan recorded these.
10. **Corin Tucker Band – Kill My Blues**. Ex- Sleater-Kinney Corin Tucker came out of nowhere with this amazing album! If you liked S-K you'll love this!
11. **Joyce Manor – Of All Things I Will Soon Grow Tired**. This band is the future of awesome Punk Rock. I'm keeping my eye on this band, they've got the lyrics and the chords, total package.
12. **Say Anything – Anarchy, My Dear**. One has to listen to Say Anything to get it, it can't be describes. Mad genius, frantic, desperate, irate, a whirlwind of passion.
13. **The Gaslight Anthem – Handwritten.** Mix Social Distortion, Springsteen, and the Cure, that's sort of the vibe of Gaslight Anthem. One great album after another. Something about them reminds me of a modern non-Christian version of the Altar Boys.
14. **The Wedding Present – Valentina**. If you haven't heard the Wedding Present, maybe it's time, you won't regret it!
15. **Chris Wollard And The Ship Thieves – Canyons**. Great Americana/ Folk Rock album from Hot Water Music's lead guitarist/singer. I still like Chuck's solo outings better, but Wollard kicked it up a notch on this one.
16. **Tenacious D – Rize Of The Fenix!** A return to glory!
17. **Smashing Pumpkins – Oceana**. Best release since Melancholy and the Infinite Sadness. Jeff Schroder from Cush/Violet Burning fame plays on it.
18. **Jimmy Cliff – Rebirth**. Rancid's Tim Armstrong produced this perfect roots reggae album from the legend himself, Jimmy Cliff! This is one of the best Ska/Reggae albums you will ever hear!
19. **The Cult – Choice Of Weapon**. This band is great at reinventing itself, album after album. A reminder of how great guitarist's used to be, Billy Duffy is still one of the best, a master at his craft!
20. **The Wallflowers – Glad All Over**. Sounds nothing like they used to, but incredible none the less! Think when the Clash went Sandinista and Combat Rock. Jack Irons (Pearl Jam/Red Hot Chili Peppers/Joe Strummer) joins on drums. Mick Jones of

FORGIVEN*
CT

I Lost myself
Can't get myself back.

CHRIS TAYLOR



The Love Coma front man talks about his art and music

INTERVIEW BY STEVE RUFF

Chris Taylor is one of my favorite artists that I discovered in the 90's. He is not only a great musician, but he is also a painter - I really dig that kind of double artist attack. He reminds me of Michael Knott, there was always the flair for the dramatic with the theatrical view, but his art could back up his persona. I was pleased to get in contact with him and find out that he is still living his life as an artist, a musician and a family man, still playing by his rules and taking the journey all in stride. We have enclosed several pictures of his artwork, it is really great stuff and reasonably priced. Check his links out and support 100% independent music and art, tell your friends about him and enjoy the interview below!

How long have you been making music at this point?

I feel like I've been making music my whole life. I've always heard melodies and drums and words in my head, but it's only been since 1986 I started to capture them on tapes, CDs and digital formats.

You are an artist as well as a musician, who are some of your primary influences as an artist?

When I was younger I was fascinated by Gary Larson's Far Side comic. They were deceptively simple and made me laugh so hard. I loved Peter Max and his Beatles work. Joseph Arthur, some street graffiti... I just look around and find things that move me and fascinate me.

How do you approach art differently than music when it comes to the creating process?

Visual art is a different set of tools. Instead of guitars I have a paint brush and canvas. I'm less precious about it. There are no rules for me as a visual artist. I mix it up and distort it and I don't try to make something that already exists a thousand times over. I'm not as concerned with what someone thinks about it as I am my music... Which is strange to me. I'm not even sure why that is.

Love Coma put out two great albums, *Soul Rash* and *Language of Fools*, then you guys seemed to just drop off the radar…why two albums and call it a day?

Well I still can't believe Love Coma was ever on anyone's radar! One of the biggest issues for us was we went the strange path of signing to a "Christian marketed label" which meant we would only be sold in religious bookstores... which, was the kiss of death for us, because we weren't religious at all. We were very interested in all the big questions... God, Spirit, relationships... I don't know... What else is there? But I was going through my David Bowie change of persona thing... eye liner and rock and roll... So it didn't sit very well next to bibles and crosses and Jesus drink coasters. So after a few years of touring and coming home broke and tired and frustrated I decided to break up the band before we all turned on one another... It wasn't our fault... It was just a messed up situation. We were in no way a sweet little Christian band of perfect, air brushed angels... And the poor record label had no way to market us into a marketplace looking for cookie cutter Jesus jingles... So what's a guy to do?

Looking back to the nineties, it was a great day for music and seemed much more sincere than so much of the output today, I suppose that is due to the ease at which people can put their stuff out in the public sphere…what are some of your fondest memories with Love Coma, who were some of your favorite bands and influences, and what artists still excite you today?

My fondest memories with Love Coma came from the road trips to destinations unknown all over the country. Myrtle Beach, Niagara Falls, recording with Mike Roe of the 77's, playing Cornerstone Festival several times... All the band humor that no one else would get. We were in our own little bubble getting to travel and make music at every turn. Each of us liked completely different kinds of music. Matt Slocum was into bands like The Sundays at the time, Chris Mattingly liked Doobie Brothers and more mainstream rock as well, Jeff Duncan liked Aerosmith
and Chili Peppers, Chris Dodds dug REM... And me? I was into Bob Dylan, The Waterboys, Echo and the Bunnymen and U2... Still am!

You are still making music as well, where can people go to track down your tunes?

If people are interested in my music they can find it at www.christaylor.bandcamp.com and then visit my official website at www.christaylorworld.com

Are you able to sustain yourself as an artist and musician, or do you have a day job to make ends meet, if so what are you doing these days?

I've sustained myself making music for many years now. Then sometimes I need to find a 9-5 job to make ends meet. As an artist, you can't be afraid to balance life when it comes to providing for a family and keeping a roof over your head. You do what you must to survive. These days I've been able to play live, sell my artwork and record as a means for a simple meter living... But I don't know how much longer I can survive just doing this in today's musical climate.

Many of the artists we cover were involved in Christian music and have since moved into different areas in regards to their faith and 'the church'; do you still claim Christianity as your belief and what does that mean to you personally?

These days I've come to hate the label "Christian". It doesn't mean what people think it means inside the Church. Most people get that look in their eyes when they find out they are talking to a "Christian" and they aren't thinking "Oh, this person is humble, loving, kind hearted, selfless and won't judge me for the junk in my life..." More than likely... it's just the opposite. I don't call myself anything when talking about myself to people. People have enough labels for me... But yes... Jesus is my rock in the weary land, as the old song goes. And my faith in Him is all that's left in a messy spiritual life that I've always known to be mine. Just put one foot in front of the other, one step at a time. But I love listening to people and their journey through life and feel comfortable hanging with anyone from about any faith... Or lack of faith... background... Their journey and story doesn't intimidate me, threaten me or make me uncomfortable... And it's great to have open dialog without strings attached.

What is in your iPod/cd player/record player right now?

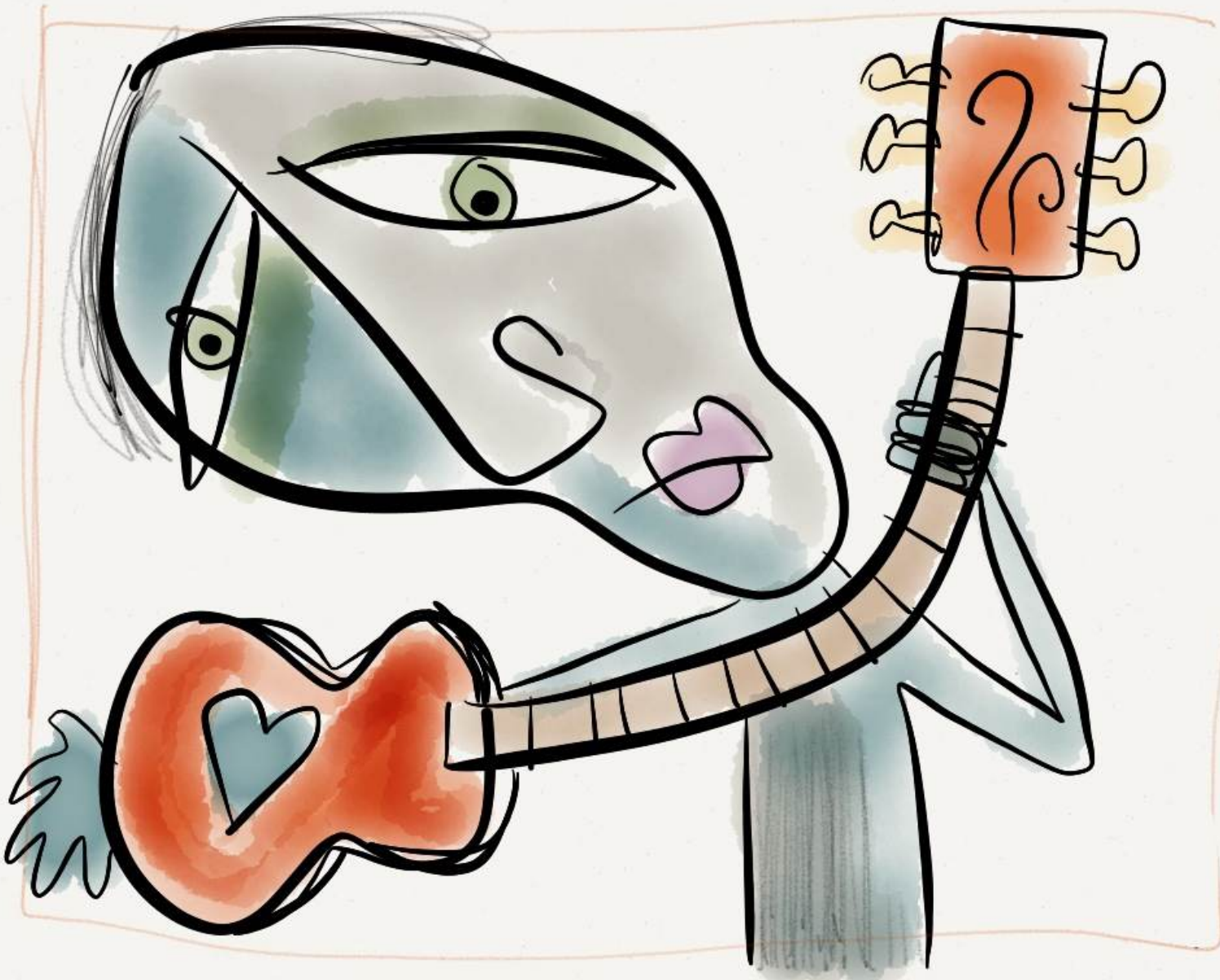
Hothouse Flowers, Joseph Arthur, Waterboys, The Choir, Adam Again, World Party, Dave Stewart, George Harrison, Leonard Cohen and some Tom Petty.

Are there any projects that you are presently working on?

Always working on something, dreaming up something, chasing something in my head.... Just finished an acoustic record called *Strangers Clothes* that you can get at my bandcamp site. Playing lots of solo gigs these days and wanted to put out something that sounded like what people had just heard.

Thanks so much for your interest in me and my music! It means a lot to have some space in your world. I really appreciate it.

www.christaylor.bandcamp.com
www.christaylorworld.com



BILL MALTONE

50 records in, and still pumping out pure quality

Interview by Steve Ruff

You have put out a huge number of albums, some via label and some self-released, can you give us somewhat of a background on the records that you have done before we talk about the new release Amber Waves?

Sure, first the bit of background. No album is made in a vacuum, you know. In places one finds oneself dictates however subtly what shows up in the writing process. For me, chasing that elusive thing called HOPE has been a driving search. Of course, the early songs were written to be delivered in a small, crowded Athens, GA club scene. There was a certain slash & burn swagger mixed with more introspective songs.

The early records and the ways they were rendered "live" made for a lot of post-punk ethos. All in all, I'd have to say early R.E.M. was undoubtedly the beacon. Their sense of energy in the midst of a happening scene was just very heady to watch and be a part of. Vigilantes of Love incubated in that same scene, and while we were signed in 1991, I did feel a sense of being part of something very original, very passionate and very cool.

So, in summation: Those first three records (JUGULAR, DRIVING THE NAILS & KILLING FLOOR) were me as a songwriter maturing, and in many ways I was intensifying as a "live" performer. That ritual of constant writing, recording and touring relentlessly set the stage for the bigger budget mid-90'S records (STRUGGLEVILLE, BLISTER SOUL, SLOW DARK RAIN & VOL). We signed to Capricorn in 1992. Having a label to "answer to" simply meant I'd think about making sure an album had a few singles on it, radio-friendly stuff. That was no issue since I've always been a huge fan of the 3 and 1/2 minute hooks laden indie pop-song. I never thought we compromised our integrity ever. In fact, if anything, we asked to get the hell out of Dodge when we felt the label ceased to "get us."

When we went back to indie status in 1997 we had made so many new fans that we could still make records easily on smaller budgets and get the fans to be the distributors. When the whole industry crashed in 2000-2001 there was just no way to find the resources to maintain a full-time band on the road. It was definitely a "grieving process," Steve. I loved the fact that VoL could be a band that played the extremes. Big noisy, rock and roll all the way down to smaller-voiced, more vulnerable material. It was an honor that our last band record, "Summershine," got fantastic reviews before the label pulled the plug on it. We were stupid to ever think the blue-grassy label we were signed to would ever "get" an American neo-psychedelic album.

50 albums in, it's a staggering number Bill! At this point how have you refined the process for yourself? Walk us through a song from conception to completion:

Well, you start to write a different kind of song, really. You trust your gut more. You learn to explore and expose differently your heart experiences and how they hit you. You develop a different nomenclature to describe things, and you learn to examine the territory of your own spirit and write about it as you age and mature a bit. You ask yourself if the old truths and templates you bet on still hold true. And if not, well which ones do you discard? It can be a very existential and destabilizing process. ALL of that is what has gone into the solo albums, some 30 of them now, if you count the EP's.

These days, as an Americana writer, I think my writing has become even more private and vulnerable these last 10 years. Like I said, you absolutely learn to trust your gut about "how" you write. There is a lessening of artifice…there's no one to please and no one to make happy. It's just me, the guitar, and a story to tell, even if it's "my own," you know. There is something very, very "freeing" about that. I have become more and more enamored of what is called "the American experience." I want the essences of that in my work. Questions like: What does it mean to suffer, to struggle, to be heroic? What does it mean to love, to have faith, to believe? Just the basic preliminary questions are where I start; I never write with a sense of where the song is going or "suppose" to go. You should never, never, never "over-think" a song or a lyric. That's why I think the WPA EP's are a wonderful thing. They are very limited in the sense that I'm working with 4 tracks, but they definitely have pushed me to see how much can be "said" with less. I really love the challenge.

Talk to the reader directly about the importance of house shows and what the "fan driven" promotion means to you as an artist

Well, for me the house show thing is truly where all the magic happens. They tend to be nurturing for both listener and performer. You've got just this massive intimacy factor. I walk in with a guitar and a bunch of songs to a room full of folks. The songs have to be strong, the dialogue engaging and most importantly: YOU HAVE TO CONNECT WITH FOLKS. Doing house gigs under all sorts of conditions has made me a better performer and made me write a different sort of song.

My contention is that underneath; we're all living in the same skin. Whether it is our joys & sadness or our fears and hopes, I think we're all pretty much cut from the same cloth. THAT'S the space I try to get into in these shows. I still love the big noisy rock club scene, and most of the last two records roll that way, but even so, when I'm playing solo or with Muriah, it's a different thing that's being brought to the moment, you know? It's those minimum of variables that make them all different and wonderful.

In the liner notes to *Amber Waves* you mention the "failed experiment" of democracy. I was just talking about that very thing with a friend recently, can you elaborate on that and where the music fits in to that pattern of thinking?

I think it has failed, but NOT because there's something wrong with democracy. It has failed in America because we have this idea that raw, un-tethered capitalism is somehow synchronous with democracy. They are two very different things, in my opinion. We have allowed our political processes to be engorged with money and as Bob Dylan so aptly said, "money doesn't talk...it swears." Jeremiah said, "The human heart is desperately wicked. Who can understand it?" If that is so, then when you introduce that heart to the dynamics of unchecked capitalism, then greed is bound to be the result, and that is exactly what you have in this country today.

We live in a country where there is an ever-widening gap between the rich and poor. The rich with their wealth tend to insulate themselves from not only from economic disaster, but from the cries of those who are marginalized and disenfranchised. American history is riddled with the sad story of this dynamic. I'm not advocating a massive socialism or a welfare society. I AM all for justice to show her face in the forms of opportunities like jobs brought home to our shores, like education and health care being pretty close to free.

We've conducted a foreign policy based on "PAX AMERICANA." It's some stupid throw-back notion that came out of and older doctrine called "manifest destiny." It's simply another form of colonialism and corporations have run with it for years now, and the result is that there are fewer jobs here. We have no energy policy and we're as dependent on foreign oil as ever. We should not be in the dark. Jimmy Carter, and more recently Al Gore, have eloquently described what the end of the matter is for our planet. When big oil, or the agribusiness field and/or pharmaceutical field start dictating the vertical and horizontal of Government policy, then we're catering to the rich, the powerful, and I would say, the greedy. THAT's where democracy has failed. It has simply become an unexamined by-word for capitalism. For some strange reason a large cross-section of the evangelical church here seems to think democracy and capitalism are the same thing.

Americana/folk music has always had the underpinning of social/political commentary as well as references to spirituality from a personal and collective perspective…

how do you find in this day and age, and at this time in history, social/political commentary and spirituality intersect, and can they be blended without controversy?

Very much "yes," to the first part of your question: Of course there are the beautiful themes of love & loss & death, grieving and hope. But also, into Americana music is woven a distinctive socio-political spirit. From the songs of Christian believers seeking religious freedom, to the songs of the slaves, to the songs wrought in the mountains of Appalachia, to the miners songs, farmer songs, to the songs of those victims of the Great Depression; songs of the rail-riders, the dust bowl/migrant worker songs, and all the way down to the songs of African-Americans seeking equal rights. Americana music is a great vehicle for those stories of struggle. Johnny Cash could bring it. I love Woody Guthrie's sticker on his guitar "This Machine Kills Fascists." It's a testimony to how a small relatively cheap instrument can be powerful. It can tell a story. It can report the news. It can change people's hearts.

Musically, what are some of your favorite tracks on *Amber Waves*?

Oh, I dunno if I could answer that one, Steve. They're all your babies and at different times they all take 1st place. This record definitely is "conceptual" in the senses that certain themes are connected via the sequencing, so it's hard to break it up. That's the way I've always listened to music. It's the WHOLE album, not just the "single." Off the bat, I'd say, the title track, “Amber Waves (golden)”, “To The Nines”, “One Kiss At A Time”, “Faith Comes Soaked in Gasoline”, “Yeah, Yeah, Yeah”, “Break In The Clouds”, “What You Take & What You Leave Behind”, “Walking Disaster”, & the closer "Into God Knows What." But, see we're up to 9 songs already! I can't answer it! We’ve been playing many of those 'live' and getting good responses.

What songs have become some of your favorites to play live in the last few months?

We (Muriah & I) really have enjoyed playing a new one called "Fight Song." And another called “Steering Wheel." They'll both be on a new EP called *Fight Songs/WPA 15*...which will surface early next year. Currently, "Faith Comes Soaked in Gasoline" has been a "show-stopper." And "Into God Knows What" has been a wonderful, if melancholy closer.

Of course the stories that accompany these songs in the "live" setting are part of the ticket. Obviously I don't put spoken word stories on an album, but a lot of folks after the shows have said they love the delivery of such stories preceding the song. It's pretty cool when you get the occasional comparison to John Prime or Townes Van Sant or Kris Kristofferson. Good company!

What plans are you making for the Holidays and coming back east?

Oh, Muriah and I hardly ever go into hibernation for long. I've written a new Christmas song called "Heart Like A Train" which I'll record and post before Christmas. I hope she'll record a solo EP next year. She is just an amazing voice and songstress. And since this lil' operation is so word-o-mouth (THANK YOU DOWN THE LINE ZINE FOR THE INK!) and under-the-radar, we try to keep up on booking and writing and planning the next album...never-ending, you know?

It's almost non-stop...but we really do make for some down-time around December. A winter in Northern New Mexico is a thing of beauty.

Lots to reflect on and lots to be thankful for.

Blessings to you, Steve, to Down the Line Zine and your readership!

DESTROY NATE ALLEN

interview by Joshua Lory

Destroy Nate Allen started as a solo project for Nate Allen around 2006. In 2008 his wife Tessa joined with him and the duo have played over 500 shows. Let me tell ya, the live show is an experience! Interactive and energetic, they play infectious, sing-a-long, folk-punk, and you can't help but get involved. Nate and Tessa prefer to play on the floor with the crowd circling around them as they run around the circle with an explosion of huge Rock moves. With around 7 full lengths and various comps and EP's there is plenty of material to check out – it's worth your time! 2012 will be marked as a big year for DNA with 2 new releases: their first large production with the Kickstarter funded *With Our Powers Combined* (feat. Gnarboots) and the grass roots *Eureka Recordings* (that I had the pleasure of being involved with). Let's catch up with Nate, who's in the middle of a very long tour, one that will be the last for a while.

What and who influenced you to want to play music?

When I was in Junior and High School it was Green Day, Dead Kennedy's, Sex Pistols, MXPX, Ghoti Hook, 90 Pound Wuss, Five Iron Frenzy, Squad Five-O, Havalina and The Beldings among others. I never really wanted to be a touring artist. I was a promoter for 7 or so years before I started touring. I've written songs for about half my life at this point but I never really thought I'd be a touring artist. I got my musical start promoting shows and booking tours for others. In 2007, I finished a season of school in San Francisco and decided to try my hand at touring for a season. I guess I got hooked and since then we've played over 700 shows. It's been a trip.

When did you start touring as a solo artist?

I toured for a few weekends in 2004/05. In 06, I started playing as Destroy Nate Allen and tried and played 15 shows in 16 days to see if I would burn out. I didn't. In 2007, I got in my van and went on my first US tour which lasted 6.5 months.

How would you describe your sound?

When Destroy Nate Allen first started I would say indie, folk, punk. These days we've been saying interactive, sing-a-long, folk punk. But words like comic book-like, theater, and super fun seem to be words other folks have using as of late.

When did Tessa start touring with you?

She joined the band when we got married in 2008.

How many releases does DNA have out? Where can people find them and in what format are they available?

I'm not even sure how many releases we have out. If I had to guess I'd say there has been maybe 25 DNA releases. Officially we say there are 7 full lengths, two 7" records, and several ep's or demo's. We've released music in the following formats: cd, vinyl, tape, mini disc and digital download. You can find most of it at www.destroynateallen.com/music. The bottom of that page also contains links to download my pre-destroy Nate Allen releases. (There are probably 7ish if I remember right). There are also a few releases only available via shows such as "Not Quite Yet," which is a kid friendly collection of our songs.

Let's talk about your latest release *With Our Powers Combined*, it's a much bigger production than the Lo-Fi approach to all your earlier releases, how did this come about? Who played on it?

I've always worked hard to only spend money I have on music. This means we pay for the releases and recordings up front, Most of our albums have been made in friend's homes or self-record in living room. Since we've always self-released everything we've been limited by our budget constraints. The idea to record with Gnarboots and a bunch of friends evolved over a few emails. We got really excited to make a more fleshed-out album; we didn't have enough money to make it happen on our own so we decided to let the forces of Kickstarter decide the fate of the album. The players were as follows: Tessa and I, Adam, Aaron and Bob from Gnarboots, Jack from Comadre, Seth from Link 80, Anthony from Bill Skins Fifth Will Punch You Right In Face, our friend Noah on trumpet and a few other folks for hand claps. The album was truly collaborative so which is one of the reasons we chose to call it "With Our Powers Combined."

It was a Kickstarter funded album, how was your experience with Kickstarter?

I absolutely loved working with Kickstarter. It gave us a reason to reach out to a lot of friends and fans we hadn't talked to in a while. We put a lot of heart and soul into the project but it was completely worth it. My only regret is that a few of the rewards were a little over the top and much more work than I had originally estimated... If I had to do it over, I would have simplified things a bit.

Where can the new album's be found?

You can find it at www.destroynateallen.com. You can also find all our current tour dates on our site. We'll be on tour until around Christmas 2012.

THE RADIANT DREGS

Dorf digs down and talks The Silver Chord

Interview by Steve Ruff

For those readers who don't know The Radiant Dregs, this is a great introduction! Mike Indest has featured them on DTL's Basement Tapes podcast, which is where I first discovered them. I love DIY music that is really unique and different, and the Dregs dole that out in quantity and quality. A bonus is that they offer all their music as free downloads from their website – not many people do that for really great music. The links are at the bottom of the page, so read and then download, listen and enjoy!

How long did it take to complete *The Silver Chord* from start to finish?

I started jotting down lyrics for *Silver Chord* about three years ago after our last project *Boo* was completed. Whenever an idea would cross my mind I would try to add it to one of my notebooks for possible use at a later time. Eventually I had pages of lyric fragments compiled and was ready to start the process of completing the lyrics and working them into musical arrangements. Once we decided that we were ready to create a new project and set to work it took about four months of evening and weekend writing and recording sessions.

Just to clarify, The Radiant Dregs are you and your wife Cindy, who handles what task with the writing, or is it a collaboration of whoever has time to tackle which task?

I tend to write most of the lyrics and music and Cindy helps with the vocals and production. In the past she has contributed music and lyrics but I did the bulk of the writing for *Silver Chord*. As always, Cindy did the majority of the audio engineering. *Silver Chord* was recorded on a cheap KORG Sound On Sound recorder and mixed on free Audacity software. Neither of us have any formal training so everything we do is trial and error. Cindy is the one who makes the music possible by working out the bugs and preparing the final product.

I first heard of your music through Mike Indest's Basement Tapes series, and I was stunned to see the free output of songs available through your website… pretty awesome to hand out stuff for free these days, how has the response been?

We have about 200 songs available for free download on our website dorfsmith.com. Our motivation for writing and recording music is mainly as a means of expression and personal enjoyment. We create art for the sake of art. I have never really envisioned our music as having much commercial appeal. We'd still record these songs if nobody else ever had the chance to listen to them. The fact that people do listen and download these songs and offer feedback is just icing on the cake. And the response has been amazing. Over the years we've had people from the UK to Japan to you name it write and tell us that they stumbled across our songs on our website or on YouTube and were drawn in and hooked.

I know you are a family man, how many kids do you have and what is your "day job" if you don't mind me asking?

Cindy and I have a 9-year-old son Adrian. He is our only child. When Cindy was pregnant with Adrian she developed preeclampsia and Adrian was born 3 months early at 2 ½ pounds. He was kept in the hospital for 3 months before he was strong enough to come home. Doctors said that there was a good chance Cindy would run into the same problems if she were to get pregnant again so we have decided that Adrian will be an only child. Fortunately, he had no permanent problems and has caught up with his peers and is a perfectly healthy 9-year- old. We're a happy family of three.

I have been a used book dealer for the past 7 years or so. I sell unusual and hard to find titles on eBay and Amazon. For years I worked in construction but when the economy crashed and the housing bubble burst I decided to go into business for myself and do something I loved doing. I have always been an avid reader and enjoyed a good treasure hunt. It doesn't get any better than seeking out and selling interesting used books. Being an online book dealer also allows me to work from home which gives me the opportunity to teach Adrian at home. He is currently

attending a home school charter called Connections Academy. As for Cindy, she works in the payroll department at the City of Flagstaff.

I know that you are also actively involved in politics and are Libertarian (I think) in belief and practice, ever thought of running for office locally?

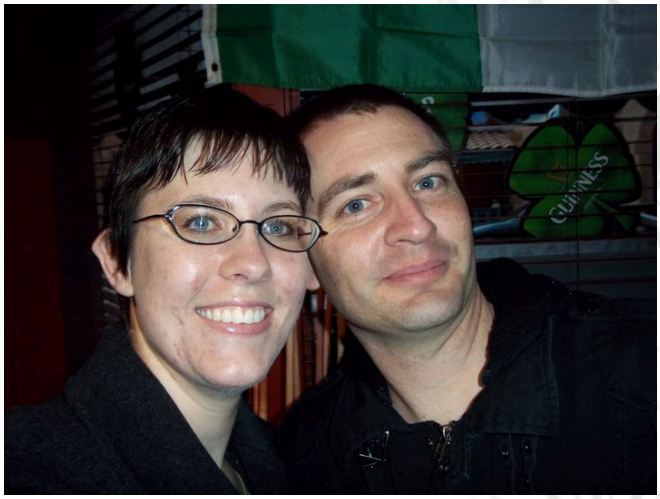
I have always been interested in politics but it wasn't until 2007 that I got extremely active and involved in the political process. Ron Paul's 2008 presidential campaign drew me in and inspired me to do everything I could to stand up for liberty. Since then, I have worked with groups across the political spectrum who support and desire freedom. I am the founder of Flagstaff Liberty Alliance, a non-partisan organization designed to promote the philosophy of liberty at the local level. We're currently working on gathering signatures to support Food Freedom Ordinances at the City and County levels. A few years ago I started the Flag Liberty Blog which is dedicated to promoting libertarian principles. It has slowly but steadily acquired a large readership and become very influential in the region.

I am asked continually by people to run for local office. A couple years ago I seriously considered a run for school board but my criticism of spending in the district would have made my run a very tough uphill battle.

I have been elected as a precinct committeeman in the Republican Party which is the lowest elected office an individual can hold but it is recognized as a political office. I was also elected as a State delegate in the Republican Party and supported Ron Paul earlier this year at the Arizona state convention. While the Republican establishment did everything in their power to fight the liberty delegates, we were able to pull off several wins and send three liberty delegates to the National Convention. Politics is a very dirty game and both major parties will cheat and do whatever they can to maintain power but I am driven to do everything I can to try to make a difference and fight the corruption that exists.

How do you feel about the outcome of the election, and what are your thoughts and opinions about politics and spirituality and where they should, or shouldn't, intersect?

I was amazed that people were surprised at the outcome of the election. It went exactly as I expected. Romney could not energize and excite Republicans and Independents because he refused to take a principled stand on anything. During the campaign I wore my reporter hat and attended a Tea Party Express Romney rally and it was dead. There was no enthusiasm or belief that Romney would be a good president. Issues like the NDAA, The Patriot Act, unconstitutional wars, civil liberties, drones over America and the Federal Reserve were hardly addressed if at all. People looking for positive change did not see Romney as the candidate to bring that change.



Cindy is currently running for Chair of the local Republican Party so I could not officially support or endorse third party candidates without hurting her campaign but I think Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson got most of the major issues right. I had the opportunity to meet him and hear him speak at Arizona State University and was very impressed.

On a local level, I was very pleased with the outcome of the election. A good friend of mine (Bob Thorpe) was elected as our State Representative. We got an excellent candidate elected to the State Senate and the Top Two voting system initiative (which would have destroyed third parties in Arizona) failed miserably. I was happy on election night.

I am always disturbed when I see any religion pushing for some kind of theocracy. I was raised in a very conservative Christian home and the Christian Coalition mentality left a very bad taste in my mouth. We all have free will and we all should have the opportunity to live our lives the way we feel is best as long as we are not hurting someone else. Spirituality may have a place in politics but religious views should never be forced on anyone.

What is your favorite track from *Silver Chord* and why?

When I listen to *Silver Chord*, "World of Lies" is always the stand out track. I love Cindy's haunting vocals and the lyrics walk a fine line between human emotion and spirituality. It creates a mood and tells a story but it's up to the listener to decide how it makes them feel and what the song is about. The best art is always open to interpretation.

I know that you guys are covering "Am I Winning Something?" on the forth coming Michael Knott tribute album, why did you pick that song and how did it feel to cover an artist like Knott?

We experimented with several songs before settling on "Am I Winning Something." After giving it a try it just felt right. I always appreciated the lyrics of *Strip Cycle* and when we were invited to be part of the Mike Knot tribute I knew I wanted to do something off that album. Knott is a legend and an incredible songwriter. I don't think we could ever do his music justice but hopefully our re-worked arrangement contributes a little something to the spirit of his music.

Let's talk about some of the instruments you use, are you typically looking for a specific sound for songs, or do you hear something and find a way to incorporate it into the music…what is your writing process?

Silver Chord is the first album the Radiant Dregs have recorded without any keyboard. I intentionally set out this time to create a project that was strictly guitar. We switched back and forth between acoustic and electric with the occasional drum machine beat added to the mix (the biggest thing lacking in our music is real percussion). I love experimenting with effects but tried to tone them down and use them to a minimal degree this time around. I went into this project knowing I wanted to make something a little more folk sounding with more traditional arrangements (verse, chorus, verse). Besides that, it could have gone anywhere. Everything I write seems to slowly evolve into the final product. I go into a song with an idea and come out with something completely surprising and unexpected.

Can you give me the back story to the song "Rocket" and where it originated? I am drawn to that track in particular for some reason, it has a "Rockstars on H" vibe to it, and I think Cindy's vocal are disarmingly beautiful and catch the listener by surprise.

"Rocket" is about the military industrial complex and how American culture works so hard to make war seem appealing and sexy. The song also contains lots of overtones and innuendo which tends to be very common in Radiant Dregs lyrics. "Rocket" is pretty much the only song on *Silver Chord* where politics openly slips in.

What music inspires you creatively these days and who are you listening to right now?

My musical taste is all over the map these days. In my car I currently have the second album by Crystal Castles in the CD player. A few weeks ago I purchased *West* by Lucinda Williams which struck a poetic chord with me. Over the past couple years I have been very inspired by Frank Black's *Fast Man Raider Man* which never gets old no matter how many times I listen to it. I find myself increasingly drawn to modern folk and alternative country acts and especially those bands that seem to be highly influenced by great lo-fi songwriters like Neil Young and Dylan.

facebook.com/pages/The-Radiant-Dregs/37692930627
dorfsmith.com/elmusicofantastio/index.html
dorfsmith.com/

SID'S TATTOO PARLOR

Interview by Steve Ruff

I first heard about Sid's Tattoo Parlor a few years back when my buddy was going out there and tattooing at Sid's shop. When my friend just opened his shop I saw all the great flash of Sid's hanging on the walls and I figured I would try to interview him and get his take on a few things. It's been really cool in the age of social media to be able to follow people like Sid and see the art they create, and to be able to follow the progress of work on various mediums. Sid's work is clean and bold, he is definitely a traditional tattooist at heart, but he has a really nice portfolio of black and grey as well. If you are in the area or thinking of traveling for some top notch work, check out Sid's Tattoo Parlor!

When did you start tattooing and when did you open your shop?

I started tattooing when I was 19, so that was 22 years ago! I opened the shop in '96, 16 years ago.

Who are your influences in your art and your tattooing?

Bill Lioka, Dave Gibson, Quinn Mallard, Philadelphia Eddie and Greg James are my main influences in tattooing. As far as art, I like a lot of Renaissance painters, especially Georges de La Tour, and my favorite painting is Salvator Rosa's *Saul and the Witch of Endor*. If I ever become a billionaire, I want to own the original! That painting was actually a huge inspiration in my decision to paint the entire book of Revelation. My interpretation of John's vision brought to life by paintings and Chuck Smith Jr. is doing a commentary to the scripture and how it relates to my art. I have the first half finished and hope to see it published by this time next year. So look for it on the web and ask for it at your local stores... I hope it will be ground breaking in the way we view Revelations and also how the world reads it. Hopefully a lot of non-believers will see it and read Revelations with an interest in how crazy and awesome the book really is. Check it soon!!!!

What is the type of tattoo that you enjoy doing the most and why?

I like doing American Traditional. It's just what I'm into. When I was in 6th grade and I started listening to my brother's rockabilly records, I noticed all the tattoos the guys in the bands had, and they were American Traditional tattoos! The best! It stuck, and it's not a fad to me, it is a part of who I am. It's a part of my scene and the music that I love. When everyone was doing biomechanical and new school, I was doing traditional.

You are a family man, how many kids and how long have you been married?

I have been married for 16 years and I have four kids.

You also have a couple of really nice cars, what cars do you have and what motorcycle do you ride?

I have a '36 Plymouth Coupe, a '28 Ford Roadster and a '57 Ford Fairlane Skyliner. I sold my Harley (police special) and my Triumph (1968 Bonneville/cafe). When I got married me and my wife rode around all the time. Now my hot rod is pretty much like a bike in some ways, no roof, wind in your eyes and face, the open road feel, and the power of an oversized motor in something very light. There's no time to ride now with kids! But I ride my wife's Vespa every now and then.

What are a couple of the most memorable stories that you have heard from clients when tattooing?

I tattooed this detective from Miami and he told me that they used to make the new guys search this one male prostitute all the time. Basically the guy had no back side under muscle so he would stuff socks in there so he wouldn't ruin his pants. Needless to say, a cop has to make sure nothing is smuggled in to jail...you can imagine!!!!!

You are also a believer, how long have you been a Christian and how did you come to faith in Christ?

I became a Christian when I was 17. I was depressed and had stopped caring about life, really. I decided to try church and it all made sense to me, so I gave my life to Christ. 25 years

Do you see tattooing continuing to evolve and become a part of the mainstream, or do you see it as always being a part of the underground?

It's definitely mainstream now, thanks to TV and Christian Audigier. But those who don't sell out and hold the art form sacred will probably always be underground, artists and collectors alike.

Do you sell flash, art, t shirts and/or paintings and where can people go to purchase?

Yes, I do! You can get my flash from Cherry Creek. Also, on my Facebook I have all my posters for sale. I should have an Etsy shop up and running soon and sometimes I put stuff on eBay as well. I usually do not sell my originals unless you happen to get one at an art show here and there, but I don't post them for sell. I had a signature line with Matix clothing for some years until they changed owners. The company Black Market sells some of my prints and posters and you should also be able to find one of my posters for sale in Dice magazine (on their web site). You can always contact me at my email sidstattooparlor@gmail.com or on face book. I also build tattoo machines and sell those but only to artists already working at shops. After my first half of Revelation is published, I will sell numbered and signed lithographs of some of the paintings! Be sure to look for those! Everything will be up on my Etsy shop when I get it done.

Sid's Tattoo Parlor
13912 Ponderosa Street
Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714) 664-8804

MOM

Glower / To Leave a Trace split
2012 Veritas Vinyl

Another split from the good folks at Veritas Vinyl. Glower is space rock with a bit of a punk rock edge. If the 1990's alternative scene had not died but kept growing, Glower is probably what that scene would currently be producing. "Spectra" is a catchy tune that is not wimpy or poppy at all. There is a definite complexity and metaphor to the music and lyrics that is missing from many bands today. To Leave a Trace is almost the polar opposite of Glower – a female fronted screamo-metal band from the Ukraine. Lots of intensity and grinding guitars on their song "Against The Flow." This song is also catchy without getting lost in the noise that so many screamo bands seem to get themselves mired in. Not sure who thought to put both of these bands on a split, but I love the combo and find myself interested in full lengths from both bands. Pre-orders are still open for different colors of vinyl, with each order coming with an instant download of the music.

– Matt Crosslin

Living Fire – Jesus Rules
2012 Thumper Punk

If you are short on cash and can only get one CD from Thumper Punk… well, just randomly pick one and it will be some great old school punk. I have heard a large number of bad punk albums through the years, so I know it is fairly easy to get punk rock wrong. But Living Fire is another in a long line of new punk bands that get it right. The lyrics are straight out evangelistic or praise and worship in nature. So in a lot of ways, this CD takes you back to the early days of the Christian punk rock movement (before the pop-punk invasion crashed the party with a long line of posers). Living Fire is a Brazilian band, so in a few places the accent comes through thick and a bit difficult to understand. But to me that gives this album a bit of original flavor that makes it stand apart from the punk rock crowd. You can buy this album digitally now, or pre-order the physical CD that is releasing in September.

– Matt Crosslin

Crying for a Vision and Other Essays: The Collected Steve Scott Vol. One
2007 AuthorHouse

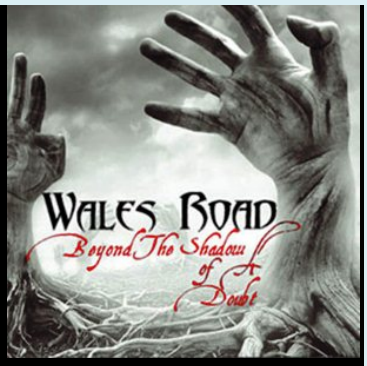
Steve Scott: poet, musician, world traveler, song writer, and all around deep thinker. If you have wanted to dive into the mind behind the art, this book is a great place to start. So just what is in the mind of Mr. Scott? Well, two-thirds of the book is focused on examinations of artistic movements, thoughts, and principles. So if you are looking for something that goes into detail about his history with The 77s, Larry Norman, or other music-related topics, you won't find a lot of that here. There is some – the last third is a great interview that does cover much of his musical / spoken word output. But that is really a minor (albeit interesting) part of the third section of the book. One major theme of the entire book is the need for multi-cultural awareness in church and art. We don't need to be forcing the entire world to follow our Westernized way of doing things in any realm. But at the same time, Scott examines how the art world is straying down paths that ultimately lead to emptiness apart from God, and how Christians need to be bringing truth to the conversation in all venues and cultures. You will probably need to brush up on your art history (or at least have a browser open to Wikipedia) while reading parts of this book, as Scott can get into rather deep academic territory at times. But those willing to dig in will find gold at every turn. The interview in the third section of the book is very informative and well conducted by Gord Wilson. It pretty much covers Scott's entire life and also hits on a wide range of topics – some that were covered in the book, and others that weren't. If you are thinking that an interview is an odd addition to a collection of Steve Scott writings – wait until you read it. It makes perfect sense. Wilson also contributes a study guide for the first part of the book, with questions and activities appropriate for individual or group study (as well as ideas for art projects). This book may be only 130 pages long, but it will probably take longer for you to dig through all the meat here than most modern trilogies out there.

– Matt Crosslin

Skypark – No Ambition
2006 Independent

Do you remember Skypark? They released two albums on one of Word Record's attempts to "go alternative" and then disappeared. Turns out they are still kicking around to some degree and have released an album on a "pay what you want basis" on BandCamp. What I remember about Skypark is that I liked the quirkiness of lyrics and songwriting. That quirkiness still seems to be here, if maybe a bit older and more mature. "Sex is a Weapon" being a good example of that (and probably also a song that Word Records would have never released). But a very catchy and heavier song that is probably my favorite of the album. Overall, they stick with the sound that they had on their first two albums – guitar-oriented rock with catchy grooves and an alternative sensibility. You can listen for yourself on BandCamp and drop them some $$$ if you like what you hear.

– Matt Crosslin

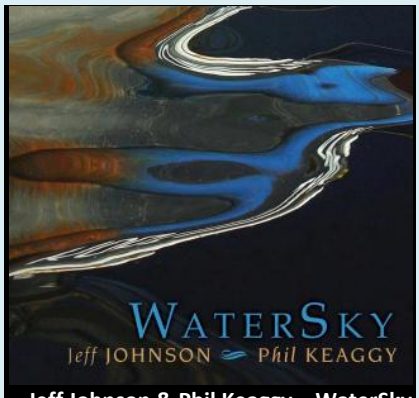


Wales Road
Beyond The Shadow Of A Doubt
2012 Independent

So I'm contacted by a band that claims they are a mix of The 77s and Rez Band. Honestly, my first thought was: yeah right. But after checking out their CD… that description is a

good place to start. Wales Road has a crazy range of influences in their music – from metal to new wave to punk. And not just in the music, but also of the vocal styles of singer/guitarist/band leader Tommy Wales. Whether or not you like this will probably depend on how you like Wales' take on combining those styles. For me, it works in most places. Three is a good mixture of original songs and a few classic hymns re-interpreted like "The Old Rugged Cross." I was also sent a DVD documentary called *Take My Life: A Rock-U-Mentary* that explains more about Tommy Wales and his ministry. You don't too often get non-Christians willing to go on camera heaping praises on a Christian musician for the Christian music they record, but there are a few here and that is impressive. Overall, a good recommendation for people that want something rocky, bluesy, punk-ish and different.

– Matt Crosslin



Jeff Johnson & Phil Keaggy – WaterSky
2012 Lo-Fidelity Records

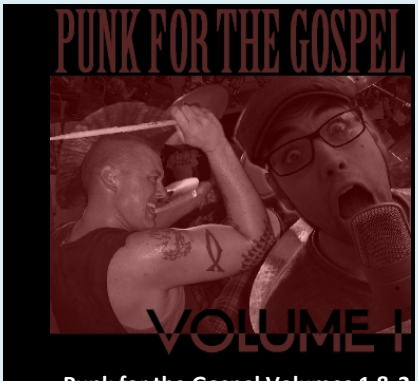
Phil Keaggy and Jeff Johnson together on one album? The amount of talent on display here is mind blowing. I hate to sound cliché, but the best words to describe this collaboration are rich, textured, nuanced, and reflective. Epic is another good overused word that truly applies here – there are eight instrumental tracks that all clock in between 5 and 8 minutes each. What also really connects with me is that this album feels like a true journey. Sometimes instrumental albums try to take you on a journey, but end up just sounding like random instrumental jams. There is thought and purpose behind every note here that makes you feel like you are seeing different shades of nature while floating along a river. Phil Keaggy makes his guitar sing on this album like only he can. Jeff Johnson adds brilliant keyboard work along with some otherworldly sounds. I also love the bass and percussion that these artists add. You hear something new each time you listen. This is actually the second album that this duo has recorded. Both collections were inspired by their time in the Frio River canyon area of Texas. After experiencing this album, I need to get out and visit this canyon. It must be one awe-inspiring sight.

– Matt Crosslin

The Predators – Roundabout
2011 Independent

The Predators are back! But, of course, since you read our last issue (right?) you knew that already. In 2011 they released their comeback nine track album*Roundabout*. You can order the physical disc and have it shipped from the UK or grab the digital version from iTunes or Amazon. I went for the Amazon version – but I think some smart US label (Retroactive… hello?) should jump on releasing this disc here (along with their back catalog). *Roundabout* is a great slab of 1980's influenced alternative rock with punk and new wave overtones. "Set Me Free" starts off with a great mid-paced alternative groove with a cry to God for freedom. "Burning Ambition" kicks in a more aggressive song with snarling guitars. "Blind Pride (Hey Mr Jones)" is a slower number that works well as a lament. "Your Love" is just catchy and fun to listen to. Fans of music from the 80s will find many sounds to like here. Bands like this keep going or call it a day based on fan support – so grab this album and let them know you want there to be new albums by the Preds in the future.

– Matt Crosslin



Punk for the Gospel Volumes 1 & 2
2012 Thumper Punk

This first compilation is what the 'Christian punk scene' has needed for quite a while…actually, we've needed this since the beginning! What I love about the Thumper Punk label is that they represent all the different facets of the punk rock sound. There are all the tired arguments of what is and isn't punk; fortunately these guys cover their bases with it all and bring you the best from the underground. This release is the first of two and all money raised from the sales of these comps goes to support missionary work from inside the punk community. The first compilation is all what I would consider the harder, edgier, white heat sounds of punk rock, and disc two offers this up as well as some more experimental sounds that also are incorporated in punk rock, although not the heaviest and rawest tracks associated within the expansive genre. (expansive and undefined) To choose standout tracks is hard because I like all of them.

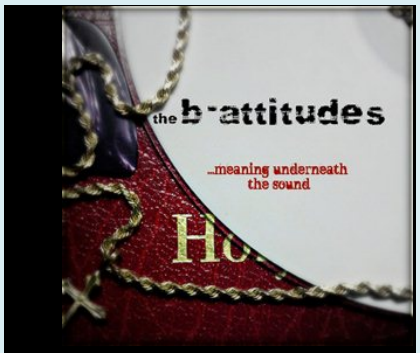
This label is the real deal. They bring good music with a positive message, music that represents a subculture that is ever evolving and changing, but these bands stay true to the DIY ethics and the call for personal and social change. If you like bands like The Pogues, Social Distortion, L.E.S Stitches, Dead Boys, Dead Kennedys, Leatherface and Bad Brains; if you miss the sounds of Agnostic Front, The Misfits, NOFX and Bad Religion as well as the messages in music by Minor Threat, Snapcase and No Innocent Victim, this is a great place to start! Also, click on their Facebook link and give them a "like". Labels like this need to get as much exposure as they can, they are a dying breed and we must support them!

– Steve Ruff

Metanoia – Retroceder Nunca
2012 Thumper Punk

This is probably a first – a punk rock CD that comes with a money back guarantee? As in, they guarantee that you will like it. If you are in to punk rock, I would probably venture to make the same guarantee. Yes, the lyrics are all in Spanish. No, I don't know Spanish – so I have no idea what they are singing. But I do find myself immediately pulled in by the grove of the first track. There is a ton of energy on this album – like the real energy that you hear from real punk bands but not the big time record label fodder. To my ears, this sounds like what MxPx would have sounded like on their first album if they were heavier. Well, that and wrote about half the number of songs. And sung in Spanish. But that is just to say that these songs are catchy, fast, and a bit on the heavy side. So give them a shot – you literally have nothing to lose.

– Matt Crosslin



The B-Attitudes
…Meaning Underneath The Sound
2012 Independent

I don't know why, but the name of this band made me think I was getting a CD of punk or maybe even ska-influenced punk… which is not a bad thing. But listening through the album I was quite surprised to get a disc full of alternative rock heavily influenced by many of our heroes and influences here at Down The Line. Daniel Amos, Poor Old Lu, Michael Knott, Collective Soul, U2, and King's X are all good points of reference for the sounds here. The first track ("Humble Me") sounds like a mix made up of a heavier Poor Old Lu with the funkier parts of Adam Again or King's X. "Whisper In A Cave" has a catchy riff that starts off with a nod to a well-known song but goes in its own direction. "Faraway" is a catchy driving acoustic number that sounds like it could have been on the original Brow Beats album. Obviously, this is an indie effort, which shows a bit around the edges here and there. I would love to hear these guys on label with a decent budget to record these songs. They will be featured on the next Basement Tapes podcast, so look out for that or check out their CD. You will like it.

– Matt Crosslin

Platoon 1107 – We Glory In The Title
2012 Thumper Punk / Veritas Vinyl

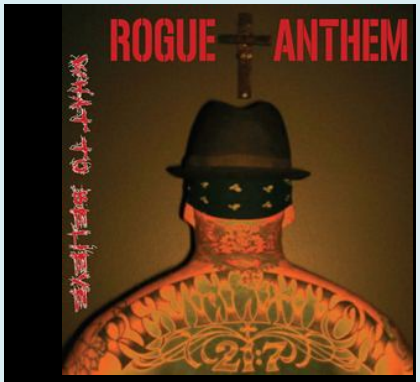
Call it crust, call it skate punk, call it crossover. Platoon 1107 is one extreme new punk album from Thumper Punk Records and Veritas Vinyl. Platoon 1107 is the solo project of Jimmy Sisco (Absolved, Of Puritans And Lepers, ex-Nomad). This album screams 80's – it sounds just like the skate/crossover mixtapes me and my friends would make to thrash to. But there is more than skate rock here – this EP is basically a tribute to the men and women that serve in the armed forces around the world. And to top all of that off, there is a cover of an Altar Boys song ("Final Hour") that features guest vocals and guitar solos by Mike Stand himself. Some might find the mixture of punk rebellion mixed with patriotic honor a bit odd, but it works here.

– Matt Crosslin

Wovenhand – The Laughing Stalk
2012 Sounds Familyre

Fans of Wovenhand know what to expect from David Eugene Edwards and company: Gothic Alternative Americana weirdness at its best. Every album from Wovenhand seems to retain the same feel while offering up some new twists that really fit well. But at its core, this is music that has to be experienced on vinyl… and Sounds Familyre rewards those who listen correctly with another beautiful record package. The letterpress cover is a sight to behold in itself – simple yet beautiful. The record also comes with a CD and digital download, so you get it all. "In the Temple" was released as an early sample of the album, and also serves as an example of one of those tracks that seem a bit different from past albums (at least to newer fans like me). At first, I wasn't sure if I liked this track, but after hearing it in context of the whole album, I have grown to love it. The whole album is solid from start to finish, like their past albums, so don't let this one pass you by.

– Matt Crosslin



Rogue Anthem – What To Believe
2012 Thumper Punk

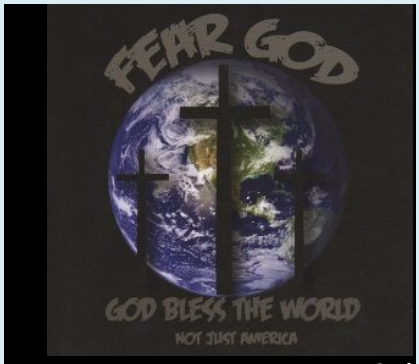
"Rogue Anthem was founded by Myke Augustat to carry a message to the forgotten and the underdog." Unfortunately, Augustat passed away in July of this year. *What To Believe* is a tribute CD to help benefit Augustat's family, with all proceeds going to Augustat's wife and children. What a great tribute it is: fast and furious punk rock that seems to touch on some crossover in many places. At times I hear a distinct influence from The Crucified… but maybe that is just the fanboy in me. That is certainly a good influence to hear. "Needle Down" brings in some harmonica and piano to the instrumental mix for a bit of groovy stomp. The mix is a bit muddy at times (hey – this is punk after all!), but not to the point of hurting your ears. Lyrically, the press release sums it up best: "raw punk rock that combats the garbage fed to us on a daily basis through the media and other sources that claim to be promoting the welfare of mankind, all the while destroying the true image of what it means to be Human."

– Matt Crosslin

Starflyer 59 – IAMACEO
2013 Independent

The fan-funded Kickstarter success is here! Well, ready for pre-orders, at least. When some had thought that Jason Martin put SF59 to rest, he came out of nowhere to announce their first independent effort. What would SF59 sound like without the backing of Tooth & Nail? Well, they still sound really good. The values, tones, etc, are all very high quality. The album is still really short, even with 10 songs. The biggest problem with the last SF59 album (*The Changing of The Guard*) was that every song sounded the same. Somehow with *IAMACEO*, Martin & company have cracked that thin line between "monotonous" and "consistent." Those hoping for Martin to rock out will be a bit disappointed – there are a few moments that are more aggressive than *The Changing of the Guard*, but this is no *Americana*. As I stated on the SF59 fan forum, I wish that they had added 3-4 more songs that really rocked out a bit more, raising the total to 13-14 songs. But that is a minor gripe – I still love the album as a whole. It is more contemplative and personal than any SF59 album in past. I still don't like the cover, but I will see if it works with the overall package when the vinyl arrives.

– Matt Crosslin



Fear God
God Bless The World, Not Just America
2012 Thumper Punk

More punk rock along the lines of Social Distortion and TSOL from the Thumper Punk label. I definitely hear a strong skate punk vibe here – This CD could almost be the soundtrack for a Bones Brigade video. Have I said that before about other Thumper Punk releases? They sure do have a knack for finding punk rock bands along a certain vein. There are a couple of oddball tunes here – "Kelly Testimony" (a gripping testimony with a back-drop of ambient music) and "Happy Birthday Dad" (a cow-pokish song that pretty much says what you think it would from the title). But the rest are fast and furious rock ditties with the occasional melodic moment thrown in for breathers. I'm starting to think that all I need to say is: It's Thumper Punk. You like punk? You'll like this.

– Matt Crosslin

180 OUT – Black and White
2012 Thumper Punk

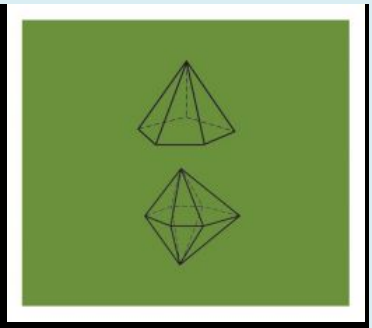
180OUT is a newer release from the Thumper Punk label, one of their lighter bands on the label. This is more pop music with the occasional surf lick thrown in for good measure. It's catchy music and its fun, but it more on the side of CCM-ish type tunes (if that's what you're into). I'm not knocking it, there are plenty of folks out there that would dig this genre, but it is not my favorite stuff the label has released. The lyrics are definitely scriptural and Christ centered, but borderline cliché lyrics about the Christian life and the evangelistic push of the Gospel. Again, not trying to be offensive, but if you are into the Thumper Punk label because of the punk genre, this is probably not going to be your cup of tea. If you are looking for just fun, poppy music with a positive message, you would probably enjoy this release.

– Matt Crosslin

Gasoline Heart – Thanks For Everything
2012 Independent

Louis Defabrizio and crew have done it again! I am hooked on this band! Very open and live feel to this recording. Honest "heart on the sleeve" lyrics that you come to expect from Gasoline Heart. *Thanks For Everything* has a bit of a darker vibe than their 2009 release *Nostalgia Ain't What It Used To Be*. Like their other releases some of the lyrics are not for sensitive Christian ears – a few f-bombs are dropped (oh no!). Louis is one of my all time favorite lyricists, up there with Michael Knott and Bill Mallonee in my book. The music is a passionate blend of Rock, Americana, and Folk Punk. Not a bad track on the album! I couldn't pick favorites because I always take the time to listen to the full album. I can't say that about many artists. This band is worth your time and support, I have liked every release. One of my top ten albums of 2012. RIYL – Bill Mallonee, Pearl Jam, Michael Knott, Tom Petty, Lucero, The Hold Steady.

– Joshua Lory



Joy Electric – Dwarf Mountain Alphabet
2012 Independent

This fan-funded release from Ronnie Martin is the latest installment from the Joy Electric front man. What a great addition to a pretty remarkable body of work that has spanned almost 20 years and seen a full length DVD release as well as 27 full studio albums. That is a huge collection of work. The remarkable thing about Joy Electric is that they/he has stayed pretty true to form in spite of the ever shifting change of public demand and attention. How many other bands record completely on analog synthesizers and stay true to vision? I don't know of any…that being said, let's talk about the record. This was a Kickstarter project, and it was pretty amazing to see Martin hit, and then escalate past, the mark in terms of fundraising goals. Joy Electric really delivers here… this might be my favorite release from them. There is something very seasoned in the sounds on this release. The record sounds very full and intentional; there isn't so much stuff going on that you worry about slipping into seizures and falling out. There is something very relaxing and whimsical about *Dwarf Mountain Alphabet*. Martin takes the listener on a journey through sound and imagination. My favorite track so far has to be "Further Into Light," which has a soundscape of really amazing and unique sounds. The closing track "Notes From a Chapter" is a perfect closer. There's an echo of loss and emptiness here at the end, but it reminds me to live in the moment and appreciate where I am in the present. I think the minimal sounds on this track, punctuated by the fullness of Martin's delivery, really accentuate the depth of emotion that encompasses this entire album. There are ten tracks of substance here that are a remarkable addition to the ongoing, spaced out, dramatic and wide-eyed world of Joy Electric.

– Steve Ruff

Seventh Circle – The Line (single)
2013 Independent

We did a full on interview with Adam Pederson quite a while back, but for your listening pleasure he has returned with the single "The Line" from the forthcoming album *Human*. This is really good music. It reminds me of the 'dreamier' aspects of Pink Floyd – definitely not the same genre, but with headphones and time to listen, you can close your eyes and really get transported away. The music is the storyteller that paints in tones and a dark ambience that is heavy and deliberate. This is kind of the soundtrack to that space in between sleep and reality. The awesome thing is the different types of music that are represented here. The mood is dark and the atmosphere is heavy, the bass is dominant and the programming of sounds build to a crescendo as the vocals echo and invite the listener into a different space and time. There are tribal beats towards the end of The Line which surprise and fit in perfectly.

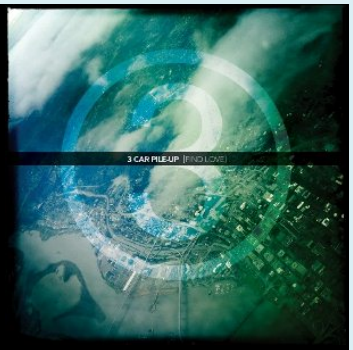
The vocals are haunting and the ethereal feel is precise. One of the coolest things about this single is the track list…you don't just get the 'A' side and 'B' side

– Steve Ruff

A Common Goal – For God and Country
2012 Thumper Punk

Thumper Punk brings you the EP debut of spirit-filled blue collar punk rock band A Common Goal. The EP is called *For God and Country*, and that pretty much describes the lyrical content of the EP. There is no doubt that these guys are Christian, but more on the side of "I'm not gonna judge, let's work this out together" than the "finger in your face, turn or burn" side that so many Christian bands have taken in the past. The vocals are the gruff vocal style that some punks love and others hate. I like that style myself, especially since they are not so rough that it sounds like the guy needs to clear his throat all the time. The punk is a bit above mid-paced range, but never getting to the near speed-metal level of some bands. It's a nice pace if you ask me. They have a full length coming soon, but until then, check out this 5 song ep (the physical CD is already sold out – so the only option now is BandCamp).

– Matt Crosslin



3 Car Pile Up – Find Love
2012 Independent

3 Car Pile Up was a "blink and you miss it" band back in the 1990's that released one full length out on Narrowpath Records (that no one recalls seeing in any stores). Such was the state of distribution in the mid to late 90s when the big labels started taking over. Their self-titled 1997 debut was heavily influenced by Starflyer 59's *Silver* album, but with a good dose of alterna-indie-rock thrown in. Fast forward 15 years and they are back with a six song ep. The *Silver*influences are pretty much gone, and the album is better for it. Now they have more of a catchy guitar-based alternative rock sound. If I could get this in CD format, it would probably be some great driving music. For now, it seems to be a digital-only release. Available at many digital outlets, including NoiseTrade – where you can tip what you like. I recommend checking this out – fans of the music we cover here will probably enjoy this release.

– Matt Crosslin

Lenny Smith
Who Was And Is And Is To Come
2012 Great Comfort Records

If you know who Lenny Smith is, chances are you have great taste in music. He is probably best known as the author of the hymn "Our God Reigns," but he has recorded many other great songs. Lenny is also the father of Daniel, aka Danielson, aka Danielson Famile, etc. In many ways, his influence can be felt all over the indie rock scene due to his obvious influence on his son. This particular project is a worship album of sorts. Don't think modern over-processed CCM worship. Think authentic, heartfelt, and a bit quirky. Not quite as quirky as most artists on the Sounds Familyre label, but still much more so than the average radio fodder artist. I can't say that I have really heard worship music this authentic and Spirit-filled since my days at Antioch Community Church in Waco. Of course, James Mark Gulley and others at ACC are a rare breed, but they are obviously drawing from the same well that Lenny Smith has been for decades. Lenny's voice is closer to Michael Knott than Danielson – which may or may not be a good thing to you depending on your feelings of those artists. The songs are mostly around the mid-paced level – never hitting a fast heavy note, but never descending into sappy love-song ballad worship. Kemper Crabb would be proud of an album like this – no "Jesus is my girlfriend" songs muddying up things here. That's not to say that there are no quieter moments. "I Have Everything I Want" is a reflective song that is quite beautiful, for example. On the other end of the spectrum is "How Blessed Is The Man" – a romping song that would fit in on a later-period Havalina Rail Co. record. As you can tell by all of the names I am bringing up, the style here is a bit difficult to pin down. Which is a good problem to have, but folk, singer-songwriter, and Americana are all good places to start. Highly recommended for people that wondered what Havalina would have sounded like on a worship project or pretty much any of the Sounds Familyre family.

– Matt Crosslin

Seaside Holiday – Seaside Holiday
2012 Independent

Seaside Holiday is a brother/sister outfit that mixes indie rock with electronica music. Their debut album was mixed and mastered by Ronnie Martin of Joy Electric fame. Those are probably the facts that most of our readers need to know in order to go check out the music. But for those that are still not convinced to go to BandCamp and listen, think of them this way. One of Martin's bands, The Brothers Martin, was an indie rock/electronica band with a very 80s sound. Update that sound with more 90s-to-current indie sound and swap in female vocals for the male vocals and you will have an idea of what Seaside Holiday sounds like. Still not convinced? Then I would also have to tell you that this is some of the more inventive yet catchy music I have reviewed for this issue. If you are looking for a new band that is inventive enough to break the molds yet familiar enough to not be too weird, this is a good place to start.

– Matt Crosslin

Forevertree –Z
2012 Independent

In the 1990s, there was a glut of Christian neo-grunge rock bands that seemed to clutter up the samplers. Each of the bands got a bit hard to remember. But I do remember that forevertree had one of the more memorable

sampler songs back in the day. Grunge with a bit more energy or maybe rock with dirtier guitars – I never was sure which. Turns out they are still around and recently cranked out this loud rock album that you can pay what you like for on BandCamp. If you actually liked some grunge before it became overdone and cliché, this album just might remind you of what you liked in the first place. The down-tuned guitars sound very grunge-ish, but at times they have the intensity and groove of nu-metal. There are shredding guitar all over this release – so not your typical burned out grunge sound. The lyrics are still directly Christian just like their first two releases (also available on their BandCamp site). Good music to rock out to or to workout with.

– Matt Crosslin

The A-Symmetrics – Into Light EP
2012 Independent

Not sure what I was expecting from a young band that contains the son of The Altar Boys Mike Stand. The obvious U2 influences on the first track were quite a pleasant surprise. These kids have a great grounding in music that makes them sound like a mature band. Maybe Stand is guiding them? But I love this mix of punk energy with modern rock sensibility. The entire EP is available on Reverb Nation for free as of this writing, so snag it before these kids take off huge. It could almost pass for a fourth Clash of Symbols album. It really is that good. Don't miss out.

– Matt Crosslin

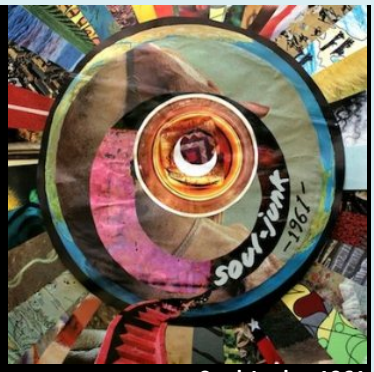
Bill Mallonee – Amber Waves
2012 Independent

Bill Mallonee has returned with a new full on studio release for this year! I think this is actually maybe his 3rd release over all this year, but this is the full studio/backing band and fan funded project. Bill continues to improve and surprise with every release from my point of view. Not one to sit around too long, he is constantly touring, writing and bringing his tunes to the people and putting the miles on the road.

What was really fun about this release is that I basically ignored almost every social media clip and unfinished track update, and I waited for the full on released product so that I could enjoy it like the days years back where the physical disc is inserted, the lyric insert is poured over while the tunes come banging through my headphones. Fans of Mallonee will dig in and enjoy this release as expected, but so should the fans that clamor and cry about missing that VoL sound. Not only is this all VoL members including Jake Bradley and Kevin Heuer, but tracks like To the Nines sound like around the bend relatives to the Slow Dark Train era. The guitar licks and ambience that spills out with One Kiss at a Time and Faith (Comes Soaked in Gasoline) feels like Summershine era brilliance. The Moog synth Bill uses on One Kiss at a Time was so awesome and amazing that it gave me a profound love for that track in particular. Mallonee has never been one confined to genre specific traps, and the use of the Moog is new ground that has been traveled and done exceptionally well!

The beautiful thing about Bill's music is his unrivaled ability to capture the stark and empty feelings of isolation, the ache and echo of hopelessness, and the sting of desolation. Yet through the trial he paints triumph, through the grief he finds the flickers of hope, and through the tragedy he finds and reminds us of the reality behind the world that confronts us. This release is number 50 for Bill, and he has endured with a weathered honesty and a poetic outlook on the American life, the introspection of the soul and the inspiration of relationship and love. This is a "must have" for all Mallonee fans present and past.

– Steve Ruff



Soul-Junk – 1961
2012 Sounds Familyre

Soul-Junk will probably win the award for most authentic stylistic changes by any band: always experimental, but swinging fully into all forms of indie, electronic, alternative, hip-hop, and rock. *1961* is labeled as a "return to core-band archaeopteryx rock form." So the hip-hop and electronic are gone and the guitars are back in front? Seems like it. This album hearkens back to the original Soul-Junk that many readers might be familiar with – catchy, quirky, a little heavy, really "alternative", a bit indie, and all Soul-Junk. Somehow Glenn Galaxy makes singing Bible verses sound cool. Most people fail at scripture lyrics to be honest… but I could listen to Galaxy's take all day long. This incarnation of Soul-Junk also sees several of John's family (and children) joining him in the fold. From what I can tell, this is a digital-only release, but it screams to be released on vinyl. Here is hoping that happens.

– Matt Crosslin

The Lonely Revolts – Remnant
2012 Thumper Punk

The Lonely Revolts release *Remnant* is one of the best releases by Thumper Punk records so far. Labeled as working man's punk rock, this is high energy, graveled throat vocals, pounding drums, booming bass lines and riffs a plenty! When I first popped it in I immediately thought Spike Nard from Crashdog had formed another band, but that was pretty cool because Crashdog is a staple of mine and was an amazing act. These guys are definitely in the same vein - they site Motorhead and Crashdog among their influences and it is easy to see why. They also remind me of early Rancid albums like Let's Go and Out Come the Wolves. The lyrics are mainly about Jesus, but they don't come off clichéd like so many other acts. These guys are also all about the social and economic temperature of the times, just like good 'ole punk should be! With only two tracks barely cresting 3 minutes, this is old school mentality of fast, loud and quick. Love these dudes and look forward to what they are bringing to the scene.

– Steve Ruff

Live Report: Bill Mallonee
New Orleans House Show 8-1-2012

Mike Indest posted a great review of a Bill Mallonee house show on his blog. Check it out here:

http://mikeindest.blogspot.com/2012/08/bill-mallonee-new-orleans-house-show.html

Various paintings by Chris Taylor